



**Next meeting** | Wednesday 6th May 2026

**Where** | Johnsonville Community Centre

**Editor** | Jane Harding [janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz)

Beginners Session. Upstairs at 6.45pm. Mark Wendelken will take a session on wintering down your hives and making sure they are ready for winter. Another take on wintering down in case you missed it last month.



*Hopefully not this winter....*

**Main Meeting: 7.30pm Small group session – get together with fellow beekeepers from your locality to share ideas and solutions.**

**Come with any questions or problems or challenges that you'd like to solve and find an answer. Our resident experts will be on hand to help!**



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*Summertime bees - looking forward to next year...*



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## From the President

I had been looking forward to last month's meeting dealing with health and safety in the apiary. Ironically on the Wednesday of the meeting I was mowing the lawns around my beehives which is normally not a problem. I could see the bees were quite hyper but I ignored that and paid the price when I got a sting on my eyelid. I can assure you this is quite painful and not to be recommended. The last time I was stung on my head was in 2017 and I ended up looking like the Elephant Woman, with major swelling which progressively dropped down my face. On that occasion I went to the doctor and she prescribed me a course of steroids for future such emergencies. When I got stung on my eyelid I took a couple of steroids and an antihistamine which I think alleviated the more serious symptoms. I still looked scary but not as bad as last time.

So the reason my bees were hyper was that they were robbing the small hive that I mentioned in a previous message. I subsequently opened that hive up and found a handful of bees and a poor little queen. She has never done well so as promised I dispatched her and amalgamated the few remaining bees with another hive.

Happy beekeeping, looking forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday (fingers crossed).

Janine



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## Yellow-Legged Hornets

There is cautious optimism that Aotearoa New Zealand might be able to get on top of the yellow-legged hornet invasion. Here are a couple of recent articles about the current state of play:

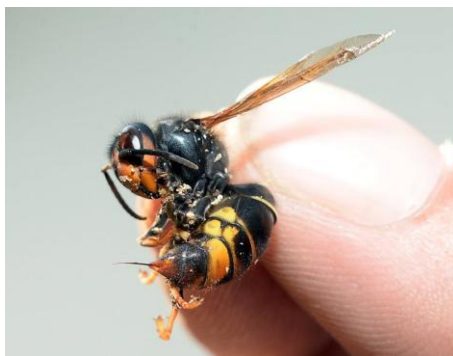
The first one is from Phil Lester, reproduced from “The Conversation”

<https://theconversation.com/nz-may-be-winning-the-fight-against-the-invasive-yellow-legged-hornet-but-a-crucial-phase-lies-ahead-28045>

The second one is from the BBC, about the hornet hunters from the UK who have been in Aotearoa New Zealand to assist Biosecurity New Zealand with techniques in finding and eliminating hornets here.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckge54dvkizo>

And coincidentally, the latest issue of New Zealand Geographic also has a great story on Hunting Hornets, which gets up close and personal with the people on the ground in Auckland tracking and killing nests.



*Close-up of a Yellow-Legged Hornet*



And here again are the links to the MPI information sheets on Yellow-Legged Hornets:

[MPI Hornet Detection updates and general information](#)

[Beekeepers Surveillance Guide](#)

[Beekeepers Action Guide to Trapping](#)

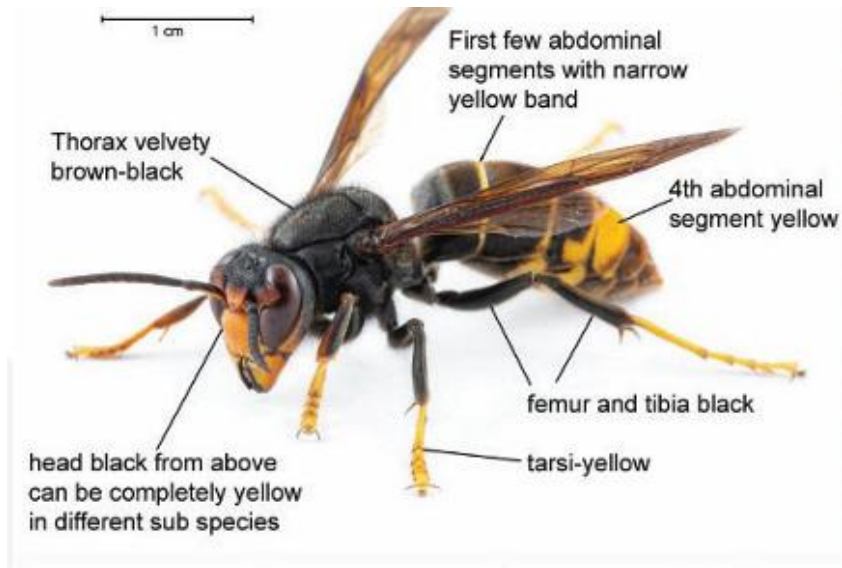
[Beekeepers yellow legged hornet FAQs](#)

There is a lot of very useful information in these links, including how to make a hornet trap, how to recognise a hornet and what to do if you suspect a hornet or a hornet's nest.

**If you see a suspected hornet or nest, photograph and report it immediately to [report.mpi.govt.nz](https://www.mpi.govt.nz) or call Biosecurity New Zealand's exotic pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66.**



## Picture of Yellow-legged Hornet with distinguishing features:



These hornets (1) are larger than the German wasps (2) we usually deal with and also larger than the Asian(3) or Australian (4) paper wasps that you might also be familiar with.



2

3

4



Also look out for hornet's nests:



Photo: John de Carteret – Jersey

Yellow legged hornet primary nest (September to January). At this time of year these small (primary) nests, are up to 21cm across but may be as small as a tennis ball. They contain one queen and brood (egg, larva and pupa stages) or one queen and workers plus brood.

Look under/check:

eaves, decks, soffits

garages, sheds

boats, trailers

low to ground, near water

sunny locations.



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## Hive management apps

Many of us are familiar with using apps on our mobiles for all sorts of things, travel bookings, ordering takeaways, when's my bus going to turn up...etc, etc.

And no surprise, there are a bunch of apps out there for managing hives. Later in the year we are planning a session on the various apps available, one of the team will do some research and find out what is out there.

In the meantime, here is one you might like to try for yourself:

<https://hivelog.io>

I've not used this, if you give it a go let us know how it works.

And at the meeting on Wednesday we'll ask about any other apps you might have used and found useful (or not)





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## Honey Competition in July

In conjunction with the AGM, we will hold our honey competition. To be sure that your entry is eligible, please familiarise yourself with the rules of the competition. The club rules can be found [here](#)

Key things to remember are that liquid or creamed honey must be presented in a glass jar (not plastic) holding around 350ml of honey (standard peanut butter jar size). Comb honey must be presented in a full frame (full size,  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  size frame).

One entry per class per member

And from the “tips and advice” section:

*The secret in this competition is to take great care in filtering your honey to remove impurities and to get rid of air bubbles.*

*The cleanliness and clarity of the container is also important.*

*Start only with the best honey that has low moisture content (so that it will keep).*

*Judges’ comments from previous years have indicated a high standard of entries, but there have been some recurring problems with impurities such as bee’s legs, air bubbles and high levels of moisture. Pay particular attention to these things to come up with a winning standard of entry. Prepare more than one entry and select the best for the competition.*



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## How to Prepare your Honey for Competition

July! I hear you say – my honey has all crystallised by July! Never mind, you can still enter the liquid honey competition by carefully heating your honey so it liquifies again. The key is to heat your honey slowly and gently, in a warm water bath or wrapped in an electric blanket so that the honey does not overheat and destroy its wonderful antibacterial and antimicrobial properties.

Make sure you use clean jars for your honey and polish the outside. Check that the jar (and lid) don't smell of whatever was in the jar before – the lids of chutney and chilli jars are often hard to clean to get rid of the residual smell and this will taint your honey.

Don't overfill the jar, and don't leave it half empty! There should be a little air gap between the honey and the lid.

Make sure you filter the honey really well to remove any wax flakes and bee parts!





And here is an interesting article from Ecrotek on Honey and Heat.

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## Heat and Honey don't mix

### **Don't overheat your honey**

Heating honey is surprisingly controversial. If you delve into the topic on the internet, you'll find all sorts of claims, some more accurate than others. While it's true that overheating honey can kill off the enzymes and antioxidants that make it so beneficial, claims that heated honey is actually poisonous have yet to be proven. Some people believe that heating changes the taste of honey as well – although this is obviously subjective and difficult to prove.

Put simply, it's generally best to avoid heating honey to a high temperature or for a long time if you value its potential health benefits. But heating isn't going to harm you, and you can safely ignore many of the wilder claims about honey and heat.

Here's our guide to heat, honey, and harm.

### **Beneficial bacteria and harmful heat**

Honey is known for its natural health and healing properties. It has been used as a home remedy for coughs and colds for centuries, and more recently, many of the benefits have been borne out in scientific studies. Naturally occurring antioxidants in honey have antibacterial and healing properties, which is why manuka honey is used for wound dressing in many hospitals.

Heating honey to high temperatures – generally above 45-50°C – eliminates these benefits by killing the bacteria, enzymes, and antioxidants that make honey so powerful. Heating honey – whether at home in the cooking process, or by commercial producers – seems like a huge waste of an



incredible natural product. If you're paying top dollar for high UMF or raw honey, heating at home seems particularly unhelpful.

## **Food safety, crystallisation, and pasteurisation**

In New Zealand and around the world, many commercial producers heat their honey during the pasteurisation process. This process may involve heating the honey to high temperatures for a long time, or flash heating in an attempt to retain beneficial bacteria.

Contrary to popular belief, pasteurisation isn't done for food safety reasons – honey is shelf-stable and acidic, which prevents the growth of harmful bacteria. Most pasteurisation is done in order to make the texture of the honey more palatable for consumers. Raw, unpasteurised honey will naturally crystallise on the shelf, but heating breaks the crystals down and helps keep it smooth and spreadable. Crystallised honey is actually fine to eat, and can be melted slightly by placing the jar in the hot water cupboard or in a bowl of warm water.

If you're keen to reap the benefits of honey, look for raw, unpasteurised honey, rather than the supermarket stuff.

## **Cooking with honey**

Overheating honey can also affect its flavour. Many people claim that heat strips out the subtle, multi-layered flavours of raw honey, making it simply sweet and one-dimensional. Although this is a matter of opinion, it's certainly worth considering, especially if you cook with honey.

Honey is a common ingredient in baking, marinades, and glazes for meat. It's also used to sweeten tea and make home remedies – who doesn't love a honey, lemon and ginger drink when they have a cold? But using honey for high-heat cooking is likely to kill off any benefits. If you're just looking to add sweetness, this is not a problem, but if you choose honey for its health properties, it's not worth using in this context.



The good news is, your tea and hot toddies are still good to go. Just wait a few minutes before stirring in your spoonful of honey, so the water in your cup isn't at boiling point, and you should be fine.

Want to learn more about heating your honey? [Talk to the honey experts at Ecrotek for advice.](#)





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## AGM

And July is of course our AGM. No beginners session, straight into the AGM at 7.30. This is usually a pretty short affair, so we're looking for a movie to screen while the honey is being judged. If you've any ideas for a good movie, let Janine or Jane know!

The agenda for the AGM is as follows:

### **2026 Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Beekeepers Association 1 JULY 2023**

**To be held at the Johnsonville Community Centre, Frankmoore Avenue, Johnsonville at 7.30pm**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. President's Report
5. Treasurers Report
6. Election of Officers –
  - President
  - Treasurer
  - Secretary
  - Additional roles of -
  - webmaster
  - librarian
  - general committee members
7. Membership Fee
8. AFB Fee and infected hive reimbursement
9. General Business



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## New Secretary Required

Your club secretary has been doing the role for 15 years and is due to retire this year. Our new constitution requires someone to stand down after 15 years in the role.

The Secretary role involves:

- organising and recording the minutes or the occasional committee meetings (usually 3 or 4 per year)
- supporting the President with correspondence
- helping to plan the meeting programme for the club
- keeping a record of who has won which awards
- taking minutes at the AGM

The role is not onerous, and only takes up 2-3 hours per month. Please contact Jane Harding

[janeh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janeh@xtra.co.nz) 0274212417

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## WBA WhatsApp Group for advice and Information

This WBA WhatsApp forum is for members to ask questions of experienced members, share general beekeeping information and seek advice from older club members. The group is up and running and Sarah is keen for more members to join.

If you would like to join up and get some of your curly questions answered, please get in touch with Sarah Dye. [sarah.c.dye@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.c.dye@gmail.com)



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## What's Coming Up?

June- Kat Holt from Palynose Services will be talking to us about pollen in honey and how it can be used to identify where honey comes from and confirm it's authenticity.

June will also be our Gadgets and Gizmos competition. So get out your clever ideas and interesting hacks for making beekeeping easier and bring them along to the June meeting.

July – AGM and honey competition

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## Who can I speak to?

President – Janine Davie [president@beehive.org.nz](mailto:president@beehive.org.nz)

Treasurer – Eva Durrant [treasurer@beehive.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@beehive.org.nz)

Secretary – Jane Harding 027 421 2417 [secretary@beehive.org.nz](mailto:secretary@beehive.org.nz)

Membership – John Burnet – 0274-379-062

Supper co-ordinator - Barbara Parkinson – (04) 2379624

Swarm WhatsApp Administrator - Jim Hepburn (021 926823)

Newsletter Editor - Jane Harding - 027 421 2417